

USDA NRCS, FSA AND RD REPRESENTATIVES MEET WITH REFUGEE FARMERS THROUGH THE NEW AMERICAN SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PROJECT



Andrea Bye (left front), NASAP Agricultural Training and Outreach Coordinator for the Somali-Bantu Community Association of New Hampshire (BSCA-NH), along with two interpreters, helps refugee farmers ask questions of NRCS State Conservationist, Rick Ellsmore, and District Conservationists Lee Green and Chad Cochrane (far right).

Somali Bantu Community Association of New Hampshire (SBCA-NH).
Website: http://mybantu.org/sbcanh_008.htm



Gregg MacPherson, of USDA Rural Development, along with Keith Farrell, Melina Marston, and Donna Juneau of the USDA Farm Service Agency provide information on their programs to the refugee farmers.

February 22, 2012, Concord, NH

Representatives from the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency and Rural Development Agency met with refugee farmers from Bhutan, Somalia, and the Congo to give them information about USDA programs and answer their questions.

The farmers participate in a program facilitated by The New American Sustainable Agriculture Project (NASAP) to support recent refugees, immigrants, and other new Americans as they establish agricultural businesses here in NH. The NASAP growers are primarily Somali, Sudanese, and Bhutanese farmers and gardeners who have resettled in Manchester, NH. They are experienced growers who are excited about the opportunity to farm in the U.S. and, for the last few years, have been producing vegetables for local markets on land located in Dunbarton and Bedford, NH. Each farmer and/or family has their own plot and is responsible for production and marketing. The farmers keep and reinvest the profits of their farm business.

In addition to providing information about USDA programs, outreach events, and workshops, the group discussed barriers to program access and how to better reach out to beginner and refugee farmers to help them understand and feel comfortable asking for USDA assistance.